

UNVEILING CEREMONY

The Ceremony

The ceremony typically has a certain order of events. First, there are readings from the book of Psalms; other prayers may be recited as well. Next, there is a eulogy from either the rabbi or a family member. At that point, the Moleh, or Memorial Prayer, takes place. Finally, the [Kaddish](#) is recited, and the cloth or veil that has covered the headstone is removed. While the events cited above are typical, the unveiling can include additional sections to make this a personal reflection of the person who has passed away.

[Click here to download the Unveiling Ceremony Guide](#)

When Does the Unveiling Take Place?

The ceremony can take place anytime between the [Shiva](#) and the [Yahrzeit](#). However, it should be held sometime during the first year after someone has died. Some people hold it close to the [Sheloshim](#), which is the 30th day after the person died.

It is usually planned for a time when close family can attend. However, there are days that are generally not religiously appropriate for [visiting the cemetery](#), such as scheduling the unveiling on days of celebration and festive periods or [holidays](#) such as Rosh Chodesh or Sukkot, which tend to take place in the fall or spring. It is important to note that the actual date set for the unveiling is flexible, and often the family selects a time that fits best with personal circumstances.

Who Attends the Unveiling?

These gatherings are generally smaller and more intimate than funerals. However, the family members are typically welcome to invite the attendees who they feel will provide the level of support and comfort that they seek. There is no strict regulation on who can attend.

Who Officiates the Proceedings?

According to religious law, it isn't necessary for clergy to be involved. The family can personally designate who will conduct the actual unveiling and a family member may wish to lead the ceremony. If a clergy member participates, it is often one who knew the person who passed away.

What Is the Significance of the Cloth Covering the Headstone?

This part of the ceremony is meant to create a moment in which the monument is unveiled in front of the family almost as though it was just constructed. This harkens back to the days when the family members erected a monument themselves.

Minyan

Traditionally, a minyan is required to recite the Mourner's Kaddish. This means at least 10 adults are to be present for this to take place. In certain circumstances, it may not be possible to have a minyan, but the unveiling can still take place.

Placing Stones on the Monument

Another custom that is frequently part of the unveiling is placing stones or pebbles on the monument. This custom has many origins and interpretations, but in its simplest explanation, it is a clear representation and reminder that the family was at the gravesite.

Planning Ahead

It is recommended to send cards to friends and family members you wish to attend a few weeks before the unveiling takes place.